

ABSTRACT

The present invention relates to selective anxiolytic therapeutic agents which allow for the treatment of anxiety-related disorders with less severe side-effects, such as sedative and amnesic effects, and in particular, dependence liability. These selective agents 5 selectively or preferentially bind the α_2 -GABA_A receptor, as compared to the α_1 -GABA_A receptor. Alternatively, these selective agents selectively or preferentially activate the α_2 -GABA_A receptor, as compared to the α_1 -GABA_A receptor. The present invention also relates to methods for identifying such selective anxiolytic therapeutic agents. The present invention also relates to methods for identifying a molecule that decreases binding of a 10 benzodiazepine to the α_1 -GABA_A receptor, but not substantially to the α_2 -GABA_A receptor.

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